Shiff Y-5 (ca. 1991) 1954 NT14 Plateau Tumans NT14
Havasupai

159 the office became unbearably hot and stuffy, I took my work to the shade of the cottonwood in front of our cottage, while Vesnor sat in the hammock until needed. I was aware that he was regarding me with a puzzled expression, but was unprepared for the question he asked, "You got man?"

"No."

"Why you no catch 'em?"

"Too busy. I've never had time."

"Um-m-m," he murmured. He couldn't figure it out. There [162] were so many more Havasupai men than women that the latter [512] were at a premium. When a girl reached the age of fourteen or fifteen there were such numbers of suitors pressing their claims that to remain single was unthinkable. Yet here was a white woman who did not want a man. It was beyond Vesnor's understanding.

I took my turn at questioning, wanting a glimpse of his past. What put those deep lines in his face and that somber look in his eyes? No doubt he had witnessed the bloody deeds of the old chief Navaho, who had recently died; deeds that had won the acclaim of the people and made him their head chief. But Vesnor had no thought of revealing his past and knew exactly when to quit answering questions and substitute, "No savvy." So weeks slipped by without my learning much of what went on in his mind, until one day he lifted a corner of the veil—and left me more puzzled than I had been before.

159 The thermometer in the shaded center of the cottonwood regis-
154 tered one hundred and seventeen degrees that afternoon while I worked in my office. Vesnor, comfortable and at ease, occupied his usual chair near the door. His eyes shone with a new eagerness, and his countenance brightened with a thought that, sooner or later, I knew he would express.

Suddenly he asked his question, "You savvy Jesus?"

"Yes," I said, "I savvy Him."

"Long time I sick. Think maybe die. Indians come, look, say pretty quick die. No eat. No sleep. Just sick—plenty!"

For a long moment he sat there, his somber eyes on space, but

2:Illiff Y-5 (ca. 1901) 1954 NT14 Plateau Yumans NT14
Havasupai

his mind was fumbling for words. "One day Jesus come. Stand by bed. All white. Dress, everything all white. Shine like sun. He say pretty quick get well. He go 'way. I get well quick."

That was all. Vesnor had no more to tell. Perhaps he saw the astonishment in my face, for his thoughts recoiled and tucked themselves away in a secret place back of his inscrutable eyes. My imagination conjured up the scene: a sick Indian lying on his blanket on the dirt floor of his home, by his side a Shining Presence. Vesnor, an untutored Indian, had experienced the miracle of healing much as John G. Whittier had so beautifully written of it:

> The healing of His seamless dress
> Is by our beds of pain:
> We touch Him in life's throng and press,
> And we are whole again.

This was Vesnor in a new version. His story left me awed and puzzled. Where did he get his concept of Jesus, the Healer? No missionary had ever worked among these people. The school employees held a Sunday service for the children, and the adults had received some instruction in the tenets of the Christian faith. But, it was arresting to learn that Vesnor, his mind ruled by spirits and strange gods and filled with the medicine man's lore, had had that priceless revelation.

The Indians respected and obeyed Vesnor. His background and experience made him a valuable policeman. Lanoman, however, gently sidestepped any errand that might involve ruffled feelings or bring unpleasant repercussions. If word must be sent to the men of the village that we had a load of freight at Hilltop, and would pay cash to the packers who brought it down, Lanoman was the man to send. He could escort tourists or forest rangers to any part of the canyon, and win their hearts while doing it. Everyone liked gentlemanly Lanoman. It was hard to believe that he had no white blood, or had never been taught the white man's social customs. Yet under that suave exterior was a mind steeped in the